



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

case of Icelanders, in addition to the family name before the entry a cross reference is given under the christian name, as *Finnur s. Jónsson*. When more than one article follows an author's name the different articles are preceded by Arabic numerals, Roman numerals being used to indicate subdivisions of articles. Thus, under *Ebbe Hertzberg's Tivulssomme ord i Norges gamle love*, each word discussed is preceded by a Roman numeral and is followed by the number of the page on which it begins. This method is applied even to the annual bibliographies. Throughout the *Register* the volume numbering of the *Arkiv* is continuous, no attention being paid to the division into old and new series. The wisdom of this is self-evident.

Part two contains a list of the books reviewed, arranged in the alphabetical order of the authors' names, with the names of the reviewers in brackets. The total number of reviews recorded is eighty-three. In the case of two authors the entry is given under the first, with a cross reference under the second name. Part three gives a list of the necrologies, together with the place and date of birth and death, the name of the writer being in brackets. Only nineteen entries, covering slightly over one page, are found here, but they include only the most considerable Scandinavian scholars, and few if any additional names would be entitled to a place there. It may be of interest to note that of the nineteen, four are Icelanders, five Norwegians, four Danes, three Swedes, and three Germans.

Part four is altogether the most important feature of the bibliography as it aims at giving references to all words discussed in the different articles, classified according to the languages to which they belong. This division takes up the last sixty-five pages. The largest sub-division is, of course, the West Northern, from p. 36 to p. 91, and the language most generously represented is the Swedish, from p. 63 to p. 85. On account of their large number, Swedish dialect words are given in a class by themselves, other dialect words are distinguished by daggers. Doubtful forms are followed by interrogation points. Old Norwegian are distinguished from Old Icelandic forms by an *N*. Words cited merely as ex-

amples are not given. These lists of Scandinavian words may be regarded as valuable supplements to the existing etymological dictionaries in the respective languages.

But the value of a work of this kind depends not so much upon skill of classification as upon accuracy of execution. Absolute accuracy is not looked for, is indeed hardly possible, in an undertaking of such extent and variety. As a test of the work on this crucial point several numbers of the *Arkiv*, chosen at random, were carefully examined, and the following slight inaccuracies were noted. The page references are to the *Register*. *litr* should be *litr*, p. 6: *nær-når* should be *nær-når*, p. 26: *rättskrivning*, should be *rättstävning*, p. 19. In the bibliography for 1897 occur the printer's errors *tidskrifter* and *i ahnidelighet*, p. 10. *Gyðingr*, 135 should be *G*, 134, p. 26. In the other parts examined not a single error was noted. Similar proof of careful work was found in connection with part four, where mistakes would be of more moment. A large number of forms was compared and only a few trifling orthographical mistakes were found.

This *Register* may be regarded as a distinct contribution to Germanic philology of that unselfish kind which will be found of value by all students of the Scandinavian languages, but which can be fully appreciated only by those who have themselves engaged in the difficult work of indexing. If other scholars are led by Herr Gebhardt's example to deal with other journals in the same generous and scientific spirit the good cause will indeed be helped.

DANIEL KILHAM DODGE.

University of Illinois.

#### FRENCH LITERATURE.

*Le mouvement littéraire contemporain* par GEORGES PELLISSIER. Plon-Nourrit & Cie, Paris: 1901. vii-302 pp.

M. PELLISSIER is one of the rare critics of our day who do not waste their whole strength in numberless magazine or newspaper articles. From time to time he feels the necessity to stop, and take a synthetic view of the field just left behind. Nothing can be more useful for men of our generation, so exclusively given

up to specialization, than such books as *Le mouvement littéraire au xix. siècle* (1890) and *Le mouvement littéraire contemporain*.

Everything seems to indicate that the success of the later volume will be as complete as that of the earlier. This is perfectly legitimate as far as the treatment of separate topics is concerned. We certainly find criticism as strikingly just and suggestive in the *xix. siècle*, as in the *Mouvement contemporain*. Bourget and de Régnier, for instance, are given as brilliant an appreciation as Sainte-Beuve, G. Sand, Flaubert, or the Goncourts. The same remarkable independence of judgment which had been highly praised ten years ago, is shown now in the author's attitude towards men like Rod and Rostand, so unduly overdone by the public. But, considered as a whole, the new work does not seem to be quite up to the standard of the first. It is not always the fault of the author. Perhaps the chief reason for it, he himself gives in his Preface:

"Le xix. siècle appartient au romantisme dans sa première moitié. C'est ensuite le réalisme ou naturalisme qui domine depuis 1850 environ jusque vers 1875 ou 1880. Chacune de ces deux écoles a successivement marqué à son empreinte la littérature contemporaine. Il y eut un état d'âme général qu'on peut appeler romantique; il y eut un état d'esprit général qu'on peut appeler réaliste" (p. v).

General views were, therefore, possible; authors could be duly classified and their works explained as manifestations of the one or the other current of thought in literature. Moreover, the second of these currents being in many respects a mere reaction against the first, a natural connection existed between the two, which constituted another element of unity in the book. But,

"dans le dernier quart de ce siècle, notre littérature n'a pas d'unité . . . Il y a eu de nos jours beaucoup d'écoles: c'est justement parce qu'aucune n'a pu s'imposer" (p. vi).

And the first words of the *Conclusion* are:

"Sauf dans l'histoire, qui, devenant objective, sort aussi de la littérature, l'évolution littéraire aboutit, de notre temps, au triomphe de l'individualisme dans tous les genres" (p. 296).

In such conditions a book on contemporary literature is bound to be more or less a mere enumeration of authors and examination of their separate works. There is, in conse-

quence, almost no connection between the different chapters; and even within the chapters themselves unity obtains only in the first few pages treating of Naturalism, which for a while continued to be in fashion, but soon, however, gave way to individualism. An exception can be made in favor of poetry, where an altogether new school has been in existence for over ten years.

We are obliged in this review to follow M. Pellissier and consider each chapter as a whole in itself.

Chap. I. *Le roman*. The first half is devoted to the last representatives of the naturalistic school. Zola, in fact, has never been a true naturalist; he has never taken nature exactly as it is, but has always adapted it to his special purposes. Our author strongly insists upon this. We frequently meet sentences like: "A vrai dire l'auteur des Rougon-Macquart ne mérita jamais le nom de naturaliste." Or: "M. Émile Zola fut de tout temps un romantique." Or again: "Il a le tempérament aussi peu naturaliste que possible." Furthermore, in the last volumes of the *Rougon-Macquart* (ended 1893) the materialism and the pessimism based upon science give way to optimism and utopianism, a tendency which only becomes more accentuated in *Les trois villes* and *Les quatre Évangiles*. Zola remains true to science, but sees in it now the instrument of progress and a cause for hope.

Maupassant and Ferdinand Fabre, rather than their master, deserve, in recent years, the name of Naturalists. And if the distinction frequently made between naturalism and realism is observed, the former meaning the faithful reproduction of nature, and the latter the artistic production based upon faithful observation of reality, Maupassant will be found to be the true naturalist, and Fabre the true realist.

There is a third kind of naturalism which M. Pellissier calls (p. 25) "naturalisme sectaire;" under the guise of sincerity and of reaction against romantic tendencies, it would emphasize the ugly side of nature. Zola at the beginning of his career indulged in it a good deal. A number of his younger disciples, of whom were Huysmans, Rod, Rosny, and Paul Margueritte, carried his theories to extremes, but after a short time abandoned them altogether.

Two causes favored the decline of French realism: the introduction in France of the English, Russian, and Scandinavian literatures (which M. Pellissier mentions only very briefly), and the so-called "banqueroute de la science," science and naturalism being for many intimately associated.

M. Pellissier is himself an admirer of realism. French art, he holds, owes much to Zola's school; something will and must remain of it:

"Quand on dit que le naturalisme fit banqueroute, on a raison si l'on veut parler du naturalisme doctrinaire et scolastique; on se trompe si l'on entend par là cette conception de l'art saine, probe, vaillante, qui consiste à rendre la nature avec autant de vérité que possible" (p. vi.).

I will try to show later that the tribute he renders to a sound realism seems to prevent him from perceiving what other literary tendencies have contributed towards progress in art.

The only "school" which can be cited, besides the Naturalistic, is that of Psychology, and the only representative of this school is Bourget. Pellissier opposes the Psychological and Naturalistic; this is hardly correct. They are parallel tendencies. Bourget was a disciple of Taine, just as Zola is. Both applied the master's theories, the only difference being that Zola takes the body, and Bourget the mind. Both are absolute determinists, as M. Pellissier himself well remarks; and once he goes so far as to say: "Le psychologisme n'est vraiment qu'une naturalisme de la vie mentale." Where, then, lies the opposition? We are further surprised to find Bourget considered as the "unique représentant" of the modern Psychological school. We should have expected to see Rod, also, classified as a psychologist. On what ground should a place be refused to the author of *Au milieu du chemin*, when one is given to the author of *La duchesse bleue*? The same argument may be maintained for others, Estaunié, for instance. If a "psychologist" writes *Le disciple*, what is the author of *L'empreinte*? The pages (45-53) on Bourget, in the work before us, are nevertheless the best I have hitherto seen.

Loti as impressionist; France as dilettante; Huysmans as "mystique sensuel;" Rod as moralist; P. and V. Margueritte as analysts;

J and H. Rosny as humanists; Paul Adam "d'intentions peu nettes" but with "certaines vellétés symboliques", Marcel Prevost as the great casuist in "feminism" and, much more than Bourget, "romancier des mondaines;" Hervieu as the cold and severe ironist; Barrès as the subtle and after all shallow egotist; Capus as a "pince sans rire;" Estaunié as the systematic psychologist; finally, Pouvillon, Theuriet, Bazin as novelists of rustic life, are successively treated, being too different from one another to allow any classification.

Perhaps M. Pellissier has too strong an inclination to see differences. Besides Rod and Estaunié, who might very well be classed as "psychologists," we wonder why the brothers J. and H. Rosny—"peut-être le plus original de nos romanciers contemporains" [?]-are not considered as Naturalists. What is the difference between *L'impérieuse bonté* and *La charpente* on the one hand, and the novels of Zola in his second period on the other?

Chap. II. *Le théâtre*. The victory of Naturalism on the stage was won much later than in the novel. There are, M. Pellissier says, three great dates in the French theatre of the nineteenth century, those of the production of *Hernani*, of *La dame aux Camélias*, and of *Les corbeaux*. Dumas and Augier had started a reaction against Romanticism on the stage, but did not accomplish much towards realism. Their ethics were *bourgeois* and their treatment of subjects just as remote from true nature as can be imagined; the evolution of their plays reminds one of geometric theorems.

"Augier et Dumas avaient présidé, voilà quarante ans, à l'évolution réaliste de notre comédie: elle se fit d'abord avec eux, elle dut ensuite se faire contre eux."

But changes of literary standards do not take place so easily on the stage as in written works. One can think over a novel, take time to understand, and thus appreciate new ideas. On the stage one has no time to reflect: thus, the new piece must succeed at once or not at all. In vain did Goncourt, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Daudet and Zola try to put on the stage dramas animated by the spirit of the naturalistic novel. One after the other failed. Even *L'Arlésienne*, which is realistic in the very best sense of the term, was unsuccessful. Ten years more

elapsed, and Henry Becque offered *Les corbeaux* (Sept. 14, 1882). It had just the regular representations at the Comédie française, and then had to be withdrawn. It was the masterpiece of the realistic school; but the public was not ready for it.

In 1887 the "Théâtre libre" was founded by M. Antoine, which went to the extremes of Naturalism and imposed on the Parisians the so-called *théâtre rosse*. This could not last, but because it went so far, it forced, so to speak, the attention of the public; whatever good there was in realism could henceforth remain. After a few years M. Antoine gave up the "théâtre libre" and founded instead the "Théâtre Antoine," in which no preference was given to any *genre*.

When the realistic drama had finally won the victory, it was just about the time when everywhere else other tendencies had begun to prevail. So it came that soon after Ancey, who was perhaps the best writer for the "théâtre libre," we have again a series of dramatic, or comic, authors who seem to have no aim or method in common: de Porto Riche, Lemaître, Lavedan, Brioux, de Curel, Hervieu, Donnay. The only tendency that perhaps slightly prevails is the "comédie d'analyse."

Owing to the great and noisy success of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, it is not possible to omit mention of the "drame historique," of Coppée, Hennique and Rostand. This enthusiasm is an accident, which will not last:

"il se peut bien que le drame lyrique et la comédie romanesque retrouvent place dans notre théâtre, mais comme quelque chose d'accessoire, comme une diversion passagère."

In this chapter, as in the former, the one thing which is to be regretted, is a disposition to emphasize to an unnecessary degree slight differences among the writers. It does not seem to me that the drama has undergone such radical changes since Dumas. Brioux and Hervieu, to mention only two of the most famous playwrights of to-day, have very much the same fashion of composition as Dumas, the first with his moral theories: "morale moyenne," as M. Pellissier says himself, and "qui s'inspire du sens commun;" the second, by the systematic arrangement of his dramas, which excludes any kind of incident and leads

straight to the end by a sort of mathematical deduction.

There is nothing surprising in this. Theatrical pieces that are meant for the stage will always have to fulfil certain requirements which, although entirely exterior, will forever restrict within rather narrow limits the evolutions and revolutions in the literature of the stage.

Chap. III. *La poésie*. Poetry was the *genre* most refractory to Naturalism. The naturalists in poetry were the Parnassians. However, a reaction started rather soon, about 1885, and not only have we anti-naturalists, as elsewhere, but a positive new creed in art has already been proposed. The Parnassians had banished imagination and subjectivism from their works; they aimed at an artistic, bright, but exact reproduction of reality. The Symbolists declared that, in doing so, those poets excluded the very essence of poetry, which is spontaneity and freedom; and in order to express plainly the ideal of their own art, they not only avoided any faithful description of nature and of their emotions, but they did away with description itself. They proceeded by suggestion. Instead of their actual thoughts and visions, they expressed only the symbols of them.

M. Pellissier takes great pains to be fair to the Symbolists and he succeeds well enough, better than many before him. The pages devoted to the revolution in the language of poetry seem to be done with special care. They deal with changes in the syntax, in the vocabulary (such as the attempt of the "romanistes" to use words of the Middle Ages), and changes especially in the versification. Everything is not new in the new poetry. The Symbolists were not the first to discover that: "plus il y a de règles, et plus les vers du grand poète ressemblent à ceux du rimeur; plus il y a de règles, et moins l'originalité personnelle trouve dans le rythme un moyen d'expression, moins le vers peut se diversifier, s'infléchir, s'approprier à l'idée ou au sentiment."

Nor were they the first to refuse to comply with strict rules. No sooner had Malherbes firmly established the classical construction of the "Alexandrin," than already the two most original verse writers of the seventeenth century, Racine and La Fontaine, proceeded to break it up. And when a new era in poetry

began, Victor Hugo again took up the work. Even the Parnassians were not too strict; Banville proved revolutionary.

This is true elsewhere as well. Verses of more than twelve syllables had been used before our time. Balf wrote some of fifteen (*vers bûifins*). Verses of an odd number of syllables can be found in the sixteenth century and later, in Malherbe, in Scarron, in Voltaire, in Banville.

M. Pellissier might have found even "vers libres" previous to Gustave Kahn. Remy de Gourmont, in his essay on *Le Vers libre*, shows a kind of "vers libre" in Latin as early as the ninth century. In the same essay de Gourmont shows that the rule of the alternation of feminine and masculine rimes is of no avail so far as the ear is concerned; except the endings in nasals (*on, ent, ant*), there are no masculine rimes in French. Therefore the rule, of course given up by the Symbolists, had as a matter of fact been a simple illusion. If the masculine rime *seuil*, for instance, be supposed to alternate with the feminine rime *cueille*, only the eye can notice the difference. Let me add here that, while M. Pellissier approves of the fact ("et rien de mieux sans doute pourvu que nous puissions faire toujours une différence entre la poésie et la prose"), he refuses to go so far as to recognize the "vers libre." Now, several critics have observed that what is called "vers libre" almost always has some rhythm in it. De Gourmont gives a few striking examples. But it will suffice to read Paul Fort's "ballades en prose" to be soon convinced.

Chap. V. *La critique*: Contains not only a statement of the actual conditions of criticism, but a discussion of its nature. There are two opposed critical methods, dogmatism and impressionism. The great representative of the dogmatists is Brunetière, who, after Taine, though in an altogether different spirit, judges productions of literature according to a definite doctrine. An opposition that should exist, according to our author, between the doctrines of Brunetière and his method is not brought forth very clearly. We understand M. Pellissier better when he expounds the so-called application of "evolution" to literature as not amounting to much more than the introduction of some scientific terms into criticism. Who has ever doubted that an evolution took place in literature? I venture

to say that the idea, if not the word, had existed in the domain of literature long before it was introduced into that of the natural sciences. However that may be, the great weakness, as well as the strength, of Brunetière lies in his application of reason alone to his judgments in literature. He ignores, theoretically at least, taste and feeling as means of artistic appreciation.

Faguet's place is between the dogmatists and the impressionists. He understands and interprets admirably the authors with whom he is dealing. He has no theory of his own like Brunetière, he is free in his criticism. He is, however, too exclusively intellectual.

The two impressionists are Anatole France and J. Lemaitre; they do not enjoy literary works from the intellectual but from the artistic view-point. Sentiment, which does not deceive, is their criterion. This is especially the case with France, whose intellectual scepticism even makes him indifferent to an occasional self-contradiction. As to Lemaitre, his impressionism is often more apparent than real. "Il joue au scepticismisme pour se préserver du pédantisme." He has a literary as well as a moral creed, but he does not declare it. His vigorous, though unjust, protest against the invasion of foreign literatures a few years ago would suffice to show that there are firmly established convictions between the ironist and the sceptic.

M. Pellissier, as said above, enters into a lengthy discussion of the superiority of those two kinds of criticism. Though not always very clear, his idea seems to be about this: a good impressionist must always be intelligent, and a good dogmatist must always prove that he has some literary taste—else neither would amount to anything. Sainte-Beuve was about the ideal. Our author seems particularly afraid of the triumph of dogmatism, for then, he says, "la critique ne consisterait plus que dans l'application des règles et l'application des règles dispenserait de talent." This argument is not very convincing. Suppose dogmatism were good, what would be the objection to it? Or, is there any advantage in having the criterion of good and bad art remain unconscious? That there is a criterion is a fact; otherwise there would be no superior or inferior criticism. M. Pellissier himself has shown that, under a good impressionism, there must be a theory of some kind or other.

Chap. VI. *L'histoire*. Naturalism has won here a great and decisive victory. History is no more to belong to literature. The scientific spirit in its treatment had already taken a firm hold on Taine and Renan. Neither of them, however, allowed himself to be bound altogether; the former used a strictly scientific method, but only to establish preconceived theories, especially to strengthen his attacks on the French revolution; the latter supplemented his scholarly researches, by drawing on his imagination wherever there was a gap in the documents. Fustel de Coulanges certainly went further in the same direction, but his syntheses were sometimes based on insufficient data. Sorel and Lavissee have both shown a spirit of great independence, the latter with a slightly moralizing touch.

M. Pellissier is very much inclined towards retaining history in the domain of art. You can hardly know all the facts, he says, and if you do, you cannot produce them all; you pick out those which go to prove your own personal views. "*L'histoire, c'est la réalité vue à travers un tempérament.*" That may be true; but is it not the same in all sciences? Does not a biologist, or a philologist, pick out the facts that help him to enforce his theory on a subject? Are we going, therefore, to deny the name of science to biology, or to philology? It may be that historians will still for a long time be artists, but I venture to say that it will certainly not be from their own choice.

I have pointed out several times the lack of "*vues d'ensemble*" in the new volume of M. Pellissier. We miss them all the more, since a work of this kind ought to make them its principal object. Of course the author maintains that "*individualism*" is the salient feature of our modern literature. But this is altogether too easy. There are limits to individualism; and to say that individualism has developed is a different thing from saying that there is no connection worth noticing among all these individuals. My impression is that the *lack* of individuality is a very general accusation made against our epoch. Would there be such a gap between literature and life?

It is surely a commonplace idea that modern literature is in a perfect state of anarchy. But men of such wide reading as M. Pellissier ought to see beyond commonplace criticism. Only once in his book does he make an allu-

sion to what seems to him might be considered a universal trait: "*Ce qui paraîtrait au premier coup d'œil caractériser la période moderne, c'est une réaction contre le naturalisme.*" And even that he would retract as far as possible. Now, certainly the chief characteristic of French literature at the end of the nineteenth century was anti-naturalism. It does not everywhere appear at exactly the same time. In the novel and the drama, Naturalism still obtain, whereas for several years it had not existed in poetry. But everywhere the tendency to anti-naturalism prevails, everywhere it may be seen by whoever chooses to open his eyes.

This is not all; besides this negative current of contemporary French literature, positive standards, new ideals, have come in. But, except in the chapter on poetry, where it was impossible not to see it, M. Pellissier does not seem to have noticed any of them. Yet, not only do they exist, but they are all more or less connected. If our modern authors do not walk hand in hand, they march in the same direction. There is a wide range of *nuances*, but one idea; namely, instead of holding fast to dry realism, let us once more try idealism. It will not be the idealism of yore; it cannot be, for science has closed many paths formerly open to the imagination. It must be some other. Some writers have been very cautious not to commit themselves; they advocate only what has been called "*une douce folie*," like A. France in his novels, or like Rostand in his drama, they react against realism by playing with romantic ideals; or again, like Loti, they try to overcome the sad, hopeless reality by some fugitive sensations which induce, at least, temporary forgetfulness.

Some go further, they would not be content, by only deceiving themselves by artistic sensations, but, believing that science does not explain everything, they try to get hold of what is left untouched by it; they realize some æsthetic ideal which is almost necessarily vague and indefinite, but which nevertheless exists. Indeed, there are innumerable authors who have tried this. Poetry, rather than anything else, has been their field: there they have best succeeded in leaving their mark. Symbolism ought to be the central chapter of a book on contemporary French literature. Not because the productions of

this school are ahead of others—they perhaps are not—but because they express in the most characteristic manner the general aspirations of the new-comers. Instead of bringing out this special spirit, M. Pellissier devotes the greatest part of his chapter on poetry to the *form* of the new verses and poems, which, as can easily be seen, was a secondary result of the whole movement. He is not unjust to the symbolists, but he praises them timidly, and seems to understand their efforts with regret. In other chapters he does not so much as mention symbolist writers, he ignores them entirely. To give only a few examples. In the chapter on the drama, what mention is there of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, the author of *Axel*, and most of all of Maeterlinck? Nothing is said of Saint Pol Roux nor of Paul Claudel. In the chapter on the novel, Villiers de l'Isle Adam (*Nouvelle Eve*); de Régnier, de Gourmont, Louys are ignored. M. Pellissier belongs himself to the generation of the realists and has accustomed himself to see only realists about him. His book is very characteristic from the point of view of its omissions. How was it possible not to speak of Mirbeau, the author of *Le jardin des supplices*, so much more original than Rod, Prévost, Pouvillon, Theuriet, and even Rosny?

It is the same ignorance of the aspiration of the young generation which leads M. Pellissier to pay so little attention to foreign literature in France. A page here and there is all he devotes to it. And yet its influence has been and still is great, owing to the fact that it possesses this note of peculiar mysticism favored by French authors as well.

Finally, another manifestation in literature, which again lies in the same line, and of which M. Pellissier does not say a word, is the alliance in the past years of several authors of mark with the Church. Not only have we the noisy Catholicism of Brunetière, but also a strong current towards upholding moral standards on religious principles, Bourget being the most illustrious example. (Huysmans has been mentioned by M. Pellissier.) This movement is far from new. As early as 1890 Jean Honcey called attention to it in a famous article in the *Revue Bleue* (Jan. 3, 1890): "Les chrétiens de lettres—le réveil religieux en France."

These few remarks will be enough to show

that there is more unity than is generally admitted in contemporary French literature, that the book of M. Pellissier ought to have expressed this unity and would thus have escaped the danger of being, in so many parts, nothing but a mere catalogue of appreciations on the work of different authors.

ALBERT SCHINZ.

*Bryn Mawr College.*

### GERMAN LITERATURE.

*Lessings Hamburgische Dramaturgie.*

Abridged and edited with introduction and notes by CHARLES HARRIS. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1901. xl+356 pp.

Moods and tastes and fashions change. Is it true that we fancy the same kind of a school edition we did twenty-five or fifty years ago? Can a given text be edited in but one way and in no other? Is it hazardous to deviate from the time-hallowed and petrified method? These are some of the questions we ask ourselves after a perusal of the above edition. The *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* has never been edited in this country before. How gratifying it would have been to find the new dressed up in new clothes! Why increase the number of text-books upon the shelves of teachers and professors, in general a mere aggregation of staleness and dullness, most of them born of the desire to edit some book or other, few of them begotten of genuine enthusiasm and profound interest?

From the point of view of greater independence on the part of the student in the pursuit of his work, little can be said in favor of most introductions to the classics. Instead of teaching the student reliance upon himself, instead of leaving him to grapple with the subject alone, and instead of giving him an opportunity to run it down in hours of vigorous absorbed attention, it offers him certain ready-made results prepared by the teacher, permitting him to take the information by an almost effortless contact with it. The same thing may be said of Prof. Harris' Introduction.

A further abridgment of the text would have been profitable. As long as translation monopolized the bulk of the student's time in and out of the class-room, and facility in translation was regarded as a sufficient index of intellectual power, it may have been feasible to